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# Curriculum Co-ordination and the Small Primary School

A thesis submitted to Middlesex University  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Bachelor of Philosophy

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October 1998

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## **Curriculum Co-ordination and the Primary School**

### **Abstract**

This research concerns small primary schools and the workloads taken on by the teaching staff compared with those in larger schools. The study concentrates on teachers' responsibilities within primary schools with particular reference to curriculum co-ordination and much use was made of the work done in the PRISMS Project (Galton 1990). A survey of 50 primary schools in a local authority was used for analysis of staffing structures, general and curriculum responsibilities allocated to teaching staff by schools and comparisons between small and large schools in terms of workloads on teachers. The research also looks at the allocation of responsibility points given by governors to the teaching staff in the schools. A case study was also undertaken with four teachers who had moved between schools of different sizes to gain an insight into their views of the workloads in small and large schools, again with particular reference to curriculum co-ordination.

It was concluded that there was an urgent need for specific release time to be set aside for co-ordinators in primary schools, especially in small schools where teachers took responsibility for more than one area of the curriculum. The provision of specific time would involve funding small schools to allow for such provision so that teachers could concentrate on the subject expertise that the National Curriculum demanded of them. Finally, very few co-ordinators felt that they were able to be effective at the present time and OFSTED reports support their views.

## **Curriculum Co-ordination and the Small Primary School**

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## **Curriculum Co-ordination and the Small Primary School**

### **Introduction**

This research began as a result of the perceived workloads that teachers in small schools were undertaking following the introduction of the National Curriculum (DES 1989). It was apparent that there were increasing workloads within primary schools, so in order to investigate this a number of head teachers from small schools set up a group to look at the workloads associated with staff responsibilities in the primary school, with particular reference to curriculum co-ordination. The work undertaken by the group of head teachers led to the individual research that the present thesis details.

The terms small and large school had first to be defined and some comparisons drawn through looking at advantages and disadvantages of school size. So that actual comparisons could be made between small and large schools, all schools in one Local Education Authority (LEA) were circulated asking for copies of their staffing structures detailing the responsibilities given to teaching staff outside their commitments to the classroom. This was very valuable information and was analysed in detail.

All these responsibilities had to be defined and those of curriculum co-ordination set aside for more detailed study. Recognition had also to be made of the major responsibilities that were taken on by staff which had a cross-curricular focus.

Interviews, as a case study, were held with practising teachers who had moved from small to large, or large to small schools to see how the changes in responsibility had affected them regardless of any salary increase.

A report was written for the LEA concerned, detailing the findings and the needs of the small schools sector (see appendix 2) and general conclusions were drawn from the study in the hope that it would provide small schools with some evidence that they might like to put before governors, LEAs and government.

Whilst a literature survey was undertaken relating to the chapters in this report, limited research was found to be available on the subject of curriculum co-ordination and the

small primary school although it is recognised by both government and the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) as a major concern.

The aim of the study was to provide arguments for further provision of funding in small primary schools relating to non-contact time, the number of staff responsibilities, expertise available, communication, shared responsibilities and co-ordinator effectiveness all judged against the background of small schools and the roles of the curriculum co-ordinators in particular within them, and to come to conclusions regarding the above.

## **Chapter 1: Small Primary Schools**

### **Overview**

In this chapter the researcher will define the small primary school in terms of size and set a definition to be used in this research. The advantages and disadvantages of small primary schools will also be discussed.

### **Definitions**

There are many definitions of the 'small school' ranging from 50 to 200 pupils, less than four teaching staff or less than ten teaching staff and there has been a lack of an agreed definition or common understanding of small schools by researchers in general (Phillips 1997).

Plowden (1967) suggested that small schools may have up to 50 pupils. In various other studies, for example Galton and Patrick (1990), Wallace (1988), Waugh (1990b), the definition of fewer than 100 pupils is used. Keast (1991) gives the Audit Commission claim that '14.5% of primary schools are small in that they have between 80 and 90 pupils'.

Other examples give larger numbers to draw the line between small and large schools (medium schools are very rarely mentioned). Arnold and Roberts' (1990) quote the Gittens Report (1967) as giving their maximum optimum size of a primary school as 150-180 pupils. But the optimum size in Coopers and Lybrand (DES 1993) is felt to be fewer than 200 pupils, '45% of all primary schools in England and Wales were of this size in 1992'.

The Department for Education and Science (DES) funded project, *Provision in Small Schools* (PRISMS), based at Leicester University was used in the book of the same name by Galton and Patrick (1990). This was one of the few major pieces of research found in this area and so is frequently referred to in the present research paper. The PRISMS project used a definition of 'fewer than 100 pupils or four full-time equivalent teachers' rather than the one provided by the DES as less than one teacher per year group.



The DES (1988) gives the number of teachers in the school as its definition of a small school in its recommendations under the *Education Reform Act: Local Management of Schools (LMS)*:

It will be for LEAs to determine which schools should have their budgets adjusted to reflect this factor (small school salary protection), the extent of cost variations to be taken into account, and the degree of protection or limitation of gain to be provided. In general, however, the Secretary of State envisages that the degree of protection or limitation of gain should be tapered according to the size of school, so that the budget shares of schools which might be expected to have ten or more teaching staff (excluding the Head teacher and Deputy) are not adjusted to take this factor into account.

(DES 1988: 23)

The above definition shows that a small school could have 11.9 teaching staff including the Head and Deputy. Assuming that the Head, and for the purpose of this definition the Deputy, have no teaching commitments a small school could have 9.9 teaching staff with classes, and at 30 pupils per class this could give a number on roll of approximately 300 although it is unlikely that all 9.9 staff would have a class teaching commitment. The actual effects of this for Enfield local authority schools for example, are as follows:

Salary Cost Adjustment - the actual salary costs are allocated to primary (JMI) schools with less than 10 teachers (excluding head and deputy). The sum allocated is the difference between the school's teachers staffing formula allocation and its actual salary costs tapered as follows:

<u>No of teachers'</u> <u>salaries</u>	<u>Allocation of actual</u>
1 - 7	100%
7.1 - 8	80%
8.1 - 9	70%
9.1 - 10	60%

(Enfield Education Department 1993: 42)

For the purposes of the present research the above DES definition for LMS will be used as the funding of small schools is of paramount importance and the above

definition is used as the basis for funding under LMS. The DES definition does not, however, clarify the whole issue completely as it is difficult to define the difference between a 10.9 teacher school and an 11.9 teacher school, for example, so there will always be grey areas in using definitions such as these.

Taking into account all the above definitions based on numbers of pupils and/or numbers of teaching staff in a school, it was decided to use the DES definition for the funding of primary schools as the basis for the present research.

### Advantages of a small school

#### Curriculum Planning

There can be little doubt that small schools have some advantages over larger schools in that the staff can find it easier to plan the whole school curriculum together; for example Bell and Sigsworth (1987:156) suggested that ‘... planning the curriculum ought to be more easily organised in a small school’. Waugh (1990a) also notes that ‘... despite having limited scope for employing subject specialists’, small schools could have an advantage over some larger schools in curriculum planning due to their smaller scale making it more difficult for teachers to put their own private classroom roles first.

In my own experience as a teacher I have found that planning in a small school is easier with fewer staff, and Yeomans (1985) suggests that in small primary schools a premium is placed on interaction skills such as giving each other time to talk and ensuring that each member of staff has their chance to have their say. It is certainly vitally important that when governors and heads of small and large schools make appointments they strongly consider the interpersonal skills of the applicants, such as the ability to listen to others’ points of view, before choosing their preferred candidate. If all goes well and appointments can be made which consider personalities as well as curricular and teaching strengths, then the staff of a small school may have an advantage over a large school in staff being able to know each other and all children in the school well.

### *Breadth and Balance in the Curriculum*

There has been concern in the past over the ability of a small school to provide a broad and balanced curriculum as found by Galton and Patrick (1990) in the PRISMS project when it became clear from what the teachers told the researchers that small schools were vulnerable to the criticism that they could not provide a broad based curriculum. Also, the Gittens report (HMSO 1967) took the view that a school should be large enough to employ sufficient teachers to provide a broad and balanced curriculum. They do go on to say, however, that they believe the optimum size to be 100-150 junior and infant pupils, or a six teacher school, with a maximum 150-180, or eight teachers.

The above figures would suggest that a small school can deliver a broad and balanced curriculum, but as Alexander et al. (DES 1992: 45) state: 'It is as wrong to assume that a small school cannot meet the full range of requirements of the National Curriculum as it is to assume that a large school can, but the balance of probability tends that way.' Such comments lead to the view that the staff in the small school are unlikely to have expertise in all subject areas. Research by Galton and Patrick (1990) in the PRISMS project found that teachers felt that the curriculum provision in a small school would be similar to that offered in larger schools and it therefore should not be inferred that larger schools, with more specialist teachers, are any more effective when planning the curriculum.

All of the above research points to the small school being capable of providing a relevant curriculum but much of the research took place before the National Curriculum was fully embedded and indeed before the revised National Curriculum (DfEE 1995). It remains to be seen whether all schools can cope with the curricular demands made on them, but recent research (Waugh 1996: 19) is beginning to suggest that many small schools are managing to get favourable OFSTED reports on the curriculum as '...curricular initiatives are implemented with much greater ease.'

## Disadvantages of a small school

### Staff Deployment and Development

Firstly, let us consider the problems that the small school has in the field of staff deployment and development. As OFSTED stated,

... is the particular curricular and pedagogic expertise of different members of staff being used to maximum effect? There may well (particularly in small schools) be real constraints, but is everything being done to help the class teacher deal with the very considerable demands of teaching the nine National Curriculum subjects plus religious education?

(OFSTED 1995a: 39)

Wallace (1988: 17) suggests '...small size has a number of consequences for management, including .... the need to develop within a small staff the expertise needed to provide a broad curriculum'. Without adequate supply teacher budgets in small schools, however, the ability of the school to enable teachers to be trained to become 'experts' in more than one subject is very limited and the time required for the successful implementation of a development programme for staff is a further disadvantage in a small school where one member of staff may have to 'train' for 2 or 3 subject areas.

With the implementation of the National Curriculum Orders (DFE 1989) all schools have a statutory obligation to cover the core and foundation subjects and are under pressure from the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) inspection system to ensure that this is so. As Horton (1996) discovered when interviewing co-ordinators regarding collaboration in schools, much is being done to fulfil the law as a first priority at the expense of true collaboration in the staffroom. Whilst every endeavour will be made, small schools may be at a disadvantage in trying to cover all subjects in depth as staffing levels may not allow for the necessary expertise to be in the school. Arnold and Roberts (1990) suggest that there may be a more restricted curriculum in a small school and the PRISMS project concluded that:

While it appears to be true that, at present, the small primary school differs in very few aspects from the larger school, its critics might argue that, as greater

use of specialist teaching becomes more widespread than hitherto, then the standards in smaller schools will begin to fall behind those of the larger ones.

(Galton 1990: 175)

It remains to be seen whether small schools can cope with the suggested changes involving more subject specialist teaching in the primary sector, although the recent paper (OFSTED 1998) reducing the statutory requirements for the foundation subjects of the National Curriculum may well alter the ways in which schools approach subject teaching and curriculum responsibilities.

One important factor in trying to ensure that the small school can satisfactorily educate its children is the appointment of staff. All schools need both expertise and quality in their teaching staff but as HMI (1992) warn there is limited scope for appointing staff with the specialist expertise to cover and co-ordinate work in small primary schools. This does not mean that it is impossible to employ quality teaching staff in a small school, but it does make Arnold and Roberts' (1990) views that the small school curriculum is more dependent on how many of the teachers have specialist skills, all the more relevant. Thus, for the head and governors, the employment of staff is a crucial factor and as Dean (1987) suggests consideration does need to be given to 'experience, skills and abilities' as well as curriculum specialisms.

### Curriculum Co-ordination and Non-Contact Time

The co-ordination of curriculum subject areas is one of the major problems for the small primary school for a variety of reasons. The role of the curriculum co-ordinator is a very varied one and will be dealt with in more detail in a later chapter, but in the main it requires the organisation of the subject area within the school and the monitoring of its effectiveness. This requires time, and it is this that has proved the main area of contention as HMI point out:

By one route or another something around 10% non-contact time for each teacher is needed. Without it many primary schools, particularly small ones, will be unable to implement fully the National Curriculum and its related assessment and reporting.

(HMI 1990: 4)

Mention of the lack of non-contact time in primary schools, especially small ones, has been going on for some time but there is still evidence that it is not in place as Blenkinsop (1991) and OFSTED (1993a) remark that 'time away from the classroom for co-ordinators is in short supply' and does not allow for monitoring of work in classrooms with colleagues. Further more, the House of Commons Education Committee recommended:

What we believe is required is that each [primary] teacher should take responsibility for one subject or a group of subjects or activities and oversee the organisation and teaching of them throughout the school - the role of the "curriculum co-ordinator". Such a role requires time *while teaching is in progress*, and we suggest it be called Monitoring and Support Time (MAST).

(House of Commons Education Committee 1994: xli)

Even the publication of a select committee report appears to have had no effect on the funding of primary schools by Government through the LEAs. An OFSTED report (OFSTED 1993b: 9) on a local school states: 'The roles of the co-ordinators are underdeveloped and they have too little influence on the work in subjects for which they are responsible'. Other reports suggest that co-ordinators have central roles within the development of their subjects which are clearly defined and well established. These are by no means unusual statements, and show the variety of stages schools are at, but without adequate funding for non-contact time, especially in small schools, the disparity between schools will continue to be the case. As Edwards remarks:

Where there was dissatisfaction with the way the curriculum was operating, problems outlined varied but all indicated lack of infrastructure support in schools. This lack ranged from difficulties in finding non-contact time, to lack of funds for co-ordinator updating and included the specific problems of small schools and the effects of current overload on staff in primary schools due to the rapid pace of change.

(Edwards 1993: 56)

Dean (1987) also reminds us that some teachers, especially in small schools, may have a great amount of studying to do to become experts in more than one subject and will need time out of school for study which again returns us to the problem of funding for the release of teaching staff to undertake this type of study. Some money is now available under Grants for Education Support and Training (GEST), recently to

become the Standards Fund. HMI and the DfEE recognise that there was a need for funding in this area, but the amounts of release possible under this heading are very small and schools continue to provide the majority of funding for their staff to undertake additional study. Also for OFSTED inspections much work needs to be undertaken by co-ordinators in studying the Guidance on the Inspection of Schools (1995b) and on the preparation of Action Plans following an inspection (Price 1997f). With the literacy and numeracy hours soon to be upon us, much further study is required.

Additional to having responsibility for a class of children, most primary teachers find themselves with the role of subject co-ordinator. The DES (1982) recognised that teachers often carried several responsibilities relating to organisation and resources, but not always curriculum matters and Alexander et al. (1992) affirm that this is true. Again the case for non-contact time is put forward, but to no avail.

### Teacher Responsibilities

It is, of course, obvious that the smaller a school staff the more difficult it becomes to share out the many and varied responsibilities for teachers in a primary school (see appendix 1). With few teachers in a small school, heads find it difficult to delegate all the responsibilities and if they are teaching themselves they have a double load to cope with. Without the finances to provide responsibility posts and non-contact time, tensions are bound to arise (Galton et al. 1990, Dunning 1993, Coopers and Lybrand 1993). All of this suggests that staff in small schools need to have strategies built into their daily lives to allow them to cope with the workload they have to face.

### Finance

Finally there is the question of finance in the small school and the problems which may arise through lack of economy of scale as pointed out by Dunning (1993) when he discusses small schools operating under inadequate formula funding and limited by economy of scale. In some LEAs, pre-LMS, there were schemes such as the Nottinghamshire Small Schools Project mentioned by Arnold and Roberts (1990) where curriculum support was given by subject experts, but as all school funding has

now to be based mainly on pupil numbers, LEAs are unable to keep back funds for the type of project mentioned above.

Since LMS was introduced into schools head teachers have become more like chief executives, spending more time managing the budget than being involved with the children (Harrison and Busher 1995).

This leaves small schools to solve their own problems. In 1975 Bullock suggested the post of language co-ordinator to include library books but that in a large school 'this would clearly need a further member of staff'. In truth there is, of course, little choice in the small school these days with no additional members of staff to share the role of language co-ordinator. This was in the days of the 'Graded Post' when Plowden (1967) suggested that the award of graded posts would have to take into account teachers' knowledge of subjects. Whilst it is quite true that expertise needs to be taken into account, there is the question of how many, if any, responsibility points (as they are now referred to) are available within a small school due to under-funding. As Waugh points out:

The small staffs of some schools and the lack of finance for posts of responsibility have ensured that the smaller schools have fewer teachers with subject responsibilities.....in some small schools, each teacher accepts responsibility for two, three or even four subjects without receiving additional salary for doing so.

(Waugh 1990b: Table 2)

Galton (1990) also reminds us that teachers often take on these responsibilities in their own time and for no financial reward. The funding of schools, and the related staffing structures which show responsibility points, will be discussed in a further chapter.

### Summary

- \* From the many definitions of the small school which are available, that which relates to the funding of schools under LMS has been chosen as the most relevant for the purposes of this research. That is, less than 10 teachers excluding head and deputy.
- \* Comparisons of small schools and large schools show key advantages and disadvantages.



- \* The advantages of the small school centre on the simpler communication procedures that can be in place relating to curriculum co-ordination, planning and the balance and breadth of the curriculum.
- \* Disadvantages relate to the pressures that come from the lack of time to take on the role of experts in many curriculum areas and to consider specialist teaching as part of the timetable. As non-contact time is in short supply there are very few opportunities for monitoring the curriculum in the classroom or for extending personal knowledge of curriculum areas. Financial considerations also affect the small school as there is likely to be less opportunity for promotion.

## **Chapter 2: Teaching Staff Responsibilities in the Small Primary School**

Enfield Small Primary Schools Headteachers Group (ESPSHG) was set up in June 1995 to look at the workload of co-ordinators. The group discussed and detailed teaching staff responsibilities in the primary school (see Appendix 1) in order to provide the local LEA with evidence and this chapter deals with that work. The group consisted of 16 head teachers who represented the small schools of the 66 primaries in the Authority at the time. These responsibilities continue to increase in number as found by Silcock and Wyness (1997) in their interviews with post-holders and head teachers and are in addition to class responsibility. The following were decided upon as covering most areas of responsibility in the primary school through discussion by the group of head teachers at various meetings, using their experience of many years in primary education:

- Curriculum
- Departmental
- Representative
- Extra-curricular
- Pastoral
- Statutory
- Administrative

Each of these areas, except that of curriculum responsibility, was taken in turn and expanded upon in order to isolate the curriculum area. This major responsibility is dealt with in a chapter of its own to allow for more detailed workload comparisons between small and large schools. Much of the detail to follow was produced by the ESPSHG and a report written for the consideration of the Authority (see Appendix 2).

### **Departmental Responsibility**

Much will depend on the size of school as to whether there is departmental responsibility within it and on the arrangements in the school's management structure, but there is less likely to be a need for departments in a small school. The responsibilities within this area will, however, involve planning for meetings, creating agendas, minuting meetings and liaising with staff as necessary. In addition policies on

continuity, progression, evaluation, etc. must be monitored and information regularly fed back to the head teacher. All areas of the curriculum have to be considered and liaison with other co-ordinators must be a priority.

### *Representational Responsibility*

The teaching staff of all schools often represent their colleagues at courses and conferences or on LEA working parties or task groups set up to study educational matters. They may also need to take staff views to the governing body or to the teachers centre, for example. All these occasions require preparation and research and written and verbal reports when feeding back to the school staff.

Liaison with the local community, industry and with other schools is also necessary especially at the time of transfer to the secondary phase.

### *Extra-curricular Responsibility*

The curriculum of the primary school extends far beyond the recommended hours that the children are to be taught in school. The extended curriculum may be through competitive sport against other schools which entails team selection, arranging practice sessions, letters to parents, telephone calls, refereeing and umpiring. After school clubs also involve similar administrative tasks and much preparation of materials and OFSTED (1995b) also consider these undertakings in its inspections of schools.

The organisation of visits and outings to shows or places of interest and extended school journeys will take many hours of a teacher's time outside official school time and must be done in a conscientious manner as the responsibility for the children's welfare during visits lies with the member of staff in charge. Health and safety risk assessments now have to be undertaken for all outings and have become another item that consumes the teacher's time.

Parents' meetings often need to be arranged for the extended journeys and medical details of the children taken along with the provision of clothing lists for the parents and other details to ensure the success of the journey.

There are functions to attend to support the school parents association in its fund raising efforts at bazaars and fairs during the school year. This liaison with parents is important, as it sets the teacher in a context outside the classroom walls.

### Pastoral Responsibility

Meetings with pupils and their parents have to be arranged, often regarding behaviour, and counselling given to the children and their parents which can often be emotionally draining for teaching staff.

Arnold and Roberts (1990) suggested that the small primary school was a caring community in which children and adults came to know each other extremely well. To ensure that this is the case policies on the pastoral work of the school need to be updated regularly and adhered to thus requiring a state of awareness amongst the whole staff at all times.

Case conferences have to be attended which require reports to be written and given verbally to those concerned. Feedback to other staff is then essential for the sake of the children involved.

Staff handbooks need to be prepared for the induction of incoming staff and time spent liaising with students and their universities regarding teaching practices.

### Statutory Responsibilities

Ever changing laws relating to the National Curriculum (1995), Health and Safety (Control of Substances Hazardous to Health), Child Protection (The Children Act 1989), need to be complied with and involve much careful reading of these Government circulars and instruments in order to keep up to date with current events.

Policies and school brochures need to be updated annually for governors so that they are complying with the law in producing documents that accurately describe the school and that are readily available to parents and the general public.

Assessment and testing procedures (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority Key Stage 1 and 2 Testing) have to be organised and arrangements made for the submission of papers to the relevant bodies.

### Administrative Responsibility

Curriculum budgets need managing through staff consultation and the ordering of the necessary materials for the school. Discussion to agree these arrangements has to take place with the school's priorities in mind following the production of the annual School Development Plan.

Some other responsibilities are to arrange for duties and rotas, parent consultation, visitors' needs and audio visual broadcasts which need recording.

### Summary

- \* The ESPSHG discussed responsibilities within the primary school and divided them into the 7 categories of curriculum, departmental, representative, extra-curricular, pastoral, statutory and administrative. Each of these has been described and some examples given of responsibilities undertaken in primary schools.

### **Chapter 3: Curriculum Co-ordination in the Small Primary School**

Amongst the many responsibilities that primary school teachers have within their own establishments (Appendix 1), the role of the curriculum co-ordinator has become a crucial one to ensure the successful delivery of the curriculum in the school. The importance of curriculum co-ordination has been recognised for some time but with the introduction of the National Curriculum (DES 1989) and the OFSTED inspection system, schools, and therefore individual teachers, are now held to much greater account regarding the curriculum, and this has meant careful consideration being given to the role of co-ordinator. As co-ordinators in small schools have more of these roles to cope with, due to the smaller number of staff, they immediately have further responsibilities to consider. In all schools, as OFSTED (1995b) state in their Guidance Document, co-ordinators have leadership and management functions and planning is at its best where senior staff and co-ordinators monitor outcomes.

#### **Origins of Curriculum Co-ordination**

The need for co-ordination of the curriculum in primary schools has, as suggested, been apparent for some considerable time. Without a system in each school that attempts to ensure consistency of approach and progression by the children in each subject area, a school could be deemed to be failing its duty to its pupils (HMI 1991) and will be liable to criticism by OFSTED (1995b) following inspections.

Some time before the National Curriculum (1989) was introduced the role of the curriculum co-ordinator was apparent but it was not very clearly defined or understood and had a variety of names. In the Plowden Report (1967) the idea of 'teachers expert in the main fields of learning' was recommended to cater for the demands of 'an expanding curriculum', and later in that report the name of 'consultant teacher' was used in the main recommendations. This theme of consultancy is also mentioned by HMI (DES 1985) when they begin to expect that the primary class teacher should have ready access to subject consultants in their schools. Yeomans (1985: 7) also makes mention of this role when he states that '...the staffroom is ... the place where the individual is asked to operate a professional consultative and decision-making role as a group member'. This role is generally in addition to being a full-time class teacher and not always by any means as a senior member of staff as Bullock (1975) was to suggest

in his report. Indeed not all post holders have the necessary qualifications for their subjects (Horton 1996) and in small schools where they may have more than one responsibility it is not unusual to have responsibilities without the expertise.

The majority of staff in any size of school has to be prepared to take on some extra responsibility, but in the small school especially it may well not be only a general cross curricular area such as equal opportunities or health education but a curriculum area as well. The main curriculum areas as defined in terms of subjects will be the more important areas for co-ordination and the Schools Council (1983: 34) discuss the idea of 'programmes of work' that need to be produced and that '...the task of putting together the overall programme may fall to the subject co-ordinator'.

The above is not so relevant now but does show that consideration has been given to curriculum co-ordination for many years. With programmes of study now clearly arranged in Key Stages 1 and 2 of the National Curriculum (1995) for each subject area, the majority of schools, although not all, expect their teaching staff to take on subject co-ordinator responsibilities, and for small schools this will generally mean all members of staff.

### Role of the Curriculum Co-ordinator

Whether called subject or curriculum co-ordinator, however, the roles will have been delegated by the head teacher and all members of staff will have to consider the best ways of dealing with the workload surrounding the curriculum organisation in the school. The curriculum co-ordinator role will involve many responsibilities:

Where possible, teachers should share responsibility for curriculum leadership, to include:

- \* detailing schemes of work in the light of the Programmes of Study;
- \* working alongside colleagues;
- \* arranging school-based In Service training (INSET);
- \* evaluating curriculum development;
- \* liaising with other schools;

- \* keeping "up-to-date" in the particular subject;
- \* managing resources.

(National Curriculum Council 1989a: 12.)

In a more recent report, Alexander et al. (DES 1992) remind us that the curriculum co-ordinator's role includes making maximum use of the subject strengths of the staff in the school, which of course will be more limited in the small primary school. This is also stressed by the House of Commons Education Committee (1994), as previously discussed, and shows that whilst the role of curriculum co-ordinator has existed in one guise or another for some considerable time, it is also likely to continue to do so for the foreseeable future. As OFSTED (1995b: 31) states: 'In most primary and middle schools it should be possible [for inspectors] to offer brief feedback to subject/aspect co-ordinators'. This does suggest that the present inspectorial system expects the role of curriculum co-ordinator to be apparent in primary schools and most schools (but not all as will be seen in the next chapter) are therefore likely to follow this model.

As can be seen from the above list of curriculum co-ordinator responsibilities, they are many and varied. Indeed there are many definitions of the co-ordinator's role which include the areas stated above and teachers have had to come to terms with a role which is no longer simply ordering stock, going on a few courses and answering any questions at staff meetings as suggested by Edwards (1993) after a survey of teacher perceptions of the role.

Indeed it is not just the curricular skills that are required of the co-ordinator, as discussed by Southworth and Lofthouse et al. (1990), but also the inter-personal skills which are important.

OFSTED (1995b) certainly perceives the role mainly in terms of leadership and management, rather than simply being the caretaker of the subjects resources and being knowledgeable about the subject matter:

The same perspective [of management] should apply to the way co-ordinators carry out their responsibilities. Leadership is concerned with building and co-ordinating a team whose members have a common purpose, a willingness to contribute individual strengths to the common purpose and a capacity to reflect critically on what they are doing and how it can be improved.

(OFSTED 1995b:102)



The role is, then, much more complex than the perception of '...purveyor of curriculum knowledge...' as Edwards (1993) found in his survey. More recently Ryan (1997) mentions the ever growing list of tasks that co-ordinators are expected to cover in his discussion of the problems of lack of non-contact time, multiple roles, lack of training and professional relationships.

The seven areas of curriculum leadership as listed by the National Curriculum Council (NCC) above will now be considered in turn although it must be remembered that this is by no means a definitive list.

### *Schemes of Work*

The production of guidelines and schemes of work is now seen as part of the role of the curriculum co-ordinator although this was not always the case. The DES (1982) found that in the majority of schools (two thirds) surveyed at that time, curriculum guidelines had been drawn up by the head teacher and that this did not necessarily involve consultation.

Since the introduction of the National Curriculum (1989) most head teachers have delegated these responsibilities, for, as the NCC (1989a: 12) recommends, '...more effective and coherent learning will take place throughout a school where there is...clear and explicit delegation of curriculum leadership'. The quality of this leadership by senior staff is also of great importance as mentioned by Lincoln and Southworth (1996) in their work with Essex primary schools and the role of the head teacher is now seen much more as managing the work of the staff in their delegated roles rather than that of being the producer of guidelines (NCC 1993). As this is now the case, schemes are produced with the participation of the staff of the school. By producing documents with full participation there is the advantage that the staff are more likely to put the schemes into action as they can feel that they have some ownership of the resulting papers.

As far as the small school co-ordinator is concerned there are advantages and disadvantages. On the one hand there are fewer staff to consult with and a consensus of opinion may therefore be easier to reach, whilst on the other hand it is likely that there will be more than one scheme of work to be produced by the same person and all

the schemes of work will contain the same amount of detail whether for a small or large school.

### *Working with Colleagues*

Working closely alongside colleagues can be very stressful for all concerned as Yeomans (1985) reminds us that it only takes '...the interference of a post holder for fragile group relationships to shatter'. Dean (1987) also came across '...the difficulty they [co-ordinators] feel in visiting classrooms to monitor work'. But it can be made to work:

In one infants' school the role of the co-ordinators had been very well developed to make use of their subject knowledge: their level of individual expertise was high, and was used effectively as each co-ordinator taught every class in the school their own subject for a block of three weeks out of every twelve.

(OFSTED 1994: 4)

In the above example the staff of the school seemed to have sufficient expertise and time to fulfil their roles as OFSTED saw them (the size of the school staff is not mentioned), but teachers do not always have sufficient access to co-ordinator time. Enfield Primary Head Teachers Conference (1995), researching into Needs Based Resourcing, estimated that individual teachers needed '...access to specialism/consultancy of 10 hours per term' and Alexander et al. (DES 1992) suggested a principle of specialist expertise in all nine National Curriculum subjects and religious education in each primary school. This is difficult in the small primary school but Price (1997a) suggests that recruiting small working parties to help may be a good strategy if it can be arranged.

Waugh (1990c: 2) points out that 'It may be that the pressures of implementing the National Curriculum have enhanced the specialist's role and perhaps made colleagues more dependent upon his expertise...' but finding time to access this expertise is still a problem as OFSTED (1995a) remark in their annual report when questioning whether teachers in primary schools are being given enough help in coping with the demands of the National Curriculum.

This is a very serious matter that has yet to be fully recognised or addressed as additional funding is involved, and the many reports that give evidence of the excessive workloads that teachers have to cope with are ignored and very little attention is paid to the plight of the small primary school especially (HMI 1990, House of Commons Education Committee 1994).

### Organising Staff INSET

Arranging school based INSET is a time consuming business that requires considerable organisational skills. The sessions may be arranged with an outside speaker to lead the day or the co-ordinator may be leading the day themselves. In any event these teachers are giving support to the staff by leading discussions and organising group work (DES 1982). With five statutory annual INSET days per school this is becoming an increasingly important part of the co-ordinator's role and is very time consuming in terms of adequate preparation and consultation with staff prior to agendas being drawn up for the days in question. These problems could be overcome by more release time being available for co-ordinators but this does require sufficient funding which few schools have. Small schools do have a slight advantage in that there are fewer staff for the co-ordinator to consult with, but the preparations for INSET days and staff meetings remain the same. In addition to the above, of course, is the role of keeping other staff up-to-date in developments in the particular area of responsibility (Price 1997b).

### Evaluating and Monitoring

Whilst much monitoring and evaluation can take place during visits to classes, where this is possible, the co-ordinator needs to find other ways of ensuring continuity and consistency throughout the school (Dean 1987, Frisby 1989). Much of this can be done by sharing teachers' planning with them and by looking at what the children are achieving (Price 1997c) but it is extremely difficult for the full time class teacher to give sufficient time to monitor all the staff in the school when their first priority has to be towards their own class of children.

A further responsibility is to monitor the effectiveness of policies and schemes of work (Price 1997d) in the area of concern and to ensure that staff receive the appropriate guidance. In the small primary school it is possible for staff to speak to each other on a

daily basis, but with more than one curriculum area for each member of staff to co-ordinate the workload remains difficult to manage and co-ordinators become concerned as they know that they are not fulfilling their roles adequately.

### *Liaising with other Schools*

Liaison with other schools will often mean the local nursery, playgroup or secondary school but for those schools in authorities where they are encouraged to work in partnership groups it can mean visiting other primary schools and sharing expertise. Keast (1991) noted that a cluster of schools near Bodmin Moor had '...developed a Curriculum Directory which is a register of teachers' strengths and useful contacts in the area'. It may serve co-ordinators in smaller schools to take some note of this and consider instigating similar systems in their own areas but simply finding the time to organise such registers could well make this impossible.

### *Keeping up-to-date*

It is essential that curriculum co-ordinators take part in study which enhances their own knowledge of their subject area and Alexander et al. (DES 1992) agree with this in giving their views that there is a need for subject co-ordinators to strengthen their expertise through study, but finding the time and the appropriate courses can be a difficult matter. This is where the LEA must be clear about the needs of its teachers so that it can provide the courses that are relevant to the needs of the schools under its authority. Schools can help by providing sufficient information in their individual school development plans which can be submitted to the LEA as sources of information to allow it to function efficiently regarding the supply of INSET that is relevant to schools' needs. After all, LEAs are now also to be inspected and so have to be seen to be giving good service to their schools.

The LEA may, therefore, be able to provide the necessary courses for co-ordinators but there is a limit to the number of day and evening courses that teachers can undertake especially if they have more than one curricular responsibility as is the case in small primaries.

### Managing Resources

As co-ordinators now invariably have their own budgets (Price 1997e), managing and organising the resources required for a particular subject area needs careful liaison with the staff of the school to assess their needs. There are many different facets to the arrangements surrounding resources. Frisby (1989: 107) suggests '...the co-ordinator's role must be to make learning resources, books, apparatus, audio/visual tapes and slides, computer software, film strips, accessible to all pupils and teachers at all times.' This is impossible, especially since the introduction of the National Curriculum, and many of these tasks have now to be delegated to non-teaching staff to undertake often at the expense of their involvement with the children's learning. The demands on the school as a whole to provide both adequate resources and the means to disseminate them are increasing without the funding to allow for this.

It is, however, easier for the small school co-ordinator to organise the resources in the school as there are fewer of them, but there does need to be adequate storage space for all the curriculum areas and this can be a major headache in any school with no spare rooms.

### Time to fulfil the role

There has long been debate over the need for non-contact time in primary schools for without it the role of the curriculum co-ordinator can be very difficult indeed. HMI (DES 1990, 1992) discussed the matter in their annual reports and concluded that subject co-ordinators could not find enough time away from their own teaching to support colleagues and that it was therefore essential that non-contact time be increased.

The House of Commons Education Committee (HMSO 1994) also recognised the problem, but, even with all the above evidence available, non-contact time is still in short supply in most primary schools whether large or small.

### Role Overload

It is quite common for co-ordinators, particularly in small schools, to have responsibility for more than one curriculum area as mentioned previously and, of

course, they do have a class of children to teach whose programme should not be too fragmented by their continued absence from the classroom (Schools Council 1983).

This is a dilemma for schools as they have to give co-ordinators time out of class if they are to promote curricular effectiveness, but the teachers involved, and the parents, then become concerned that they are away from their classes for too long. There is no easy solution to this problem but it needs to be addressed if co-ordinators are to be able to fulfil their roles successfully. In the large school some of the staff may not have responsibility for a class and so do not have this problem, but in the small school this is less likely to be the case.

### Effectiveness and Influence

Having outlined the role of the curriculum co-ordinator and other related matters none of this is relevant if the job that they do is not effective in raising standards or in influencing the teaching in the classrooms:

While co-ordinators have often had a significant impact upon both whole school planning and the management of resources, in many schools they have had little real influence on the competence of individual teachers and the quality of classroom teaching and learning.

(Alexander et al. DES 1992: 25)

The report by Alexander et al. makes it very clear that there are still problems to be resolved regarding the impact that co-ordinators have on the individual teacher in the classroom. The only solution to this would seem to be both adequate funding for teacher release and a change in the culture of the primary school where teachers are not expected to be with their own classes for so long during each week.

There is still much to do in creating school environments where the co-ordinator's role is an effective one and raises achievement by improving the teaching and learning within the establishment and particularly in small schools where the responsibilities are more extensive.

### Selection of Co-ordinators

Head teachers and governors have to ensure that they appoint the right person to the job of curriculum co-ordinator by looking carefully at the role they have to fulfil. It

may be that an appointment is to be made to fill a vacancy or that a member of the staff is to be promoted internally. The subject knowledge of the teacher concerned is of importance but it is quite common for heads and governors to be looking for competent teachers who are also capable of taking a management role alongside a curriculum area and have the ability to relate to colleagues and get the best out of them. Ryan (1997) raises the issue of leadership and the competence of co-ordinators in this respect and the work that governors and head teachers need to do in this area.

The ability to cope with the co-ordinator's role does not therefore mean that the post holder necessarily has to take charge of the same curriculum area year after year; indeed it is often advantageous, in terms of staff development, for co-ordinators to change their subject areas especially as small primary schools are not specialist establishments and cannot be compared to secondary schools in this way. Also, as Plowden recognised in 1967, '...it is improbable that any [primary] school will have sufficient choice to build up a staff which is nicely balanced in specialist knowledge'.

The above shows that head teachers and governors cannot always rely on the necessary expertise being available within the school or outside it but it can be of great value if it can be found. It is also possible, of course, to motivate people by giving them responsibility and showing trust in them (Dean 1987) and these considerations need to be a part of the deliberations when making staffing appointments. Some staff will relish the opportunity to take on responsibility (Nias 1989) as they feel that they can then have real influence over their colleagues.

Taking all these factors into account when appointing co-ordinators is no easy task, but their importance for the eventual smooth running of the school must not be underestimated. In the small school appointing a co-ordinator with the necessary skills and attributes can be a real problem and governors and heads will often be looking for candidates who are willing to be flexible in their approach to curriculum and other responsibilities.

### The Co-ordinator in the Small School

As was stressed in previous chapters and in the above text small schools do have problems in managing the curriculum with comparatively few staff. There may well be difficulties in particular areas such as the numbers of schemes of work that one person

may need to produce, the difficulty of finding release time to work with colleagues and monitor the curriculum, keeping up-to-date with more than one curriculum area at a time, managing the resources for more than one curriculum area and coping with the many other responsibilities of the primary school with limited staffing levels. There are, of course, times when some curriculum areas will be more active than others in schools but in a small school the priority areas have to be shared amongst the whole staff, if this is possible, and it is therefore likely that all staff with responsibility points will have at least one area that is active at any one time.

In a primary school survey it was found that:

...the small schools among the case studies faced the serious problem of having insufficient staff to specialise in single curriculum subjects. ...many of these found that it was necessary for teachers to attempt to develop knowledge and expertise to support their colleagues in *several* subject areas.

(Muschamp 1992: 35)

Governors, LEAs and the government have to recognise that there are significant problems for the small school and they must consider how they can help staff to cope.

In the following chapter evidence is provided from a survey on the curriculum responsibilities that are taken on in primary schools and comparisons are made between schools of varying sizes to show how workloads can differ.

### Summary

- \* The role of the curriculum co-ordinator in the primary school will remain in place at least for the foreseeable future. It is an important role for the school as workloads have to be delegated and shared no matter how many staff there may be.
- \* The curriculum co-ordinators role is a very demanding one with many aspects to it and will require a degree of expertise and/or some retraining, often in more than one curriculum area. In small schools the demands are greater simply because there are fewer teachers to share the necessary responsibilities and to fulfil the role even when some areas of the curriculum are more active than others. The effectiveness of the co-ordinator may well therefore be seriously impaired.



- \* The expansion of the role over the past few years has meant a greater workload for all co-ordinators and a commensurate increase in accountability.
- \* Class teachers find themselves torn between their class of children and their other responsibilities in the school.

## **Chapter 4: Survey of the role of the Curriculum Co-ordinator in Small and Large Schools**

### **Overview**

This chapter details the information provided by 56 primary schools in a local education authority. It considers the curriculum and other responsibilities that are held by the post holders in the schools, the differences between the small and large schools and the positions of the head teachers in the schools.

As part of this research into the role of the curriculum co-ordinator in the small primary school, the schools in one LEA were asked for copies of their staffing structures. Of the 66 requests, 56 returns were received and these were analysed for comparisons between schools of differing sizes.

These comparisons looked at:

- \* the numbers of staff in the schools
- \* the size of the school
- \* the numbers of post holders with curriculum responsibility
- \* the differences between small and large schools
- \* the differences in the head teacher's role in schools of different sizes.

The first overall study of the survey showed that of the 56 returns, 6 schools differed from the rest in their approach to curriculum co-ordination as the staffing structures of these schools did not easily lend themselves to analysis. The different approaches were, however, of interest and are therefore detailed in a later part of this chapter.

### **Analysis of the Survey of the 50 Primary Schools**

For the remaining 50 schools the definition of a small school (see chapter 1) as having less than 10 teaching staff, not including head or deputy (11.9 staff in all), was used but rounded up to 12 staff, and the information in table 1 emerged.

In table 1 below, it can be seen that there are 20 small schools and 30 large schools in the survey, using the definition of a small school given above. This suggests that there are 20 schools who might find curriculum co-ordination more difficult to cope with than the rest of the schools and further analysis needed to take place to explore this more fully.

Table 1. Staffing numbers in surveyed schools.

No.of members of staff (inc.HT & DHT)	No.of schools
4	1
8	1
9	7
10	4
11	2
12	5
Total = 20 small schools with 197 staff	
13	2
15	2
16	3
17	3
18	5
19	1
20	6
21	2
22	2
23	1
24	1
26	1
38	1
Total = 30 large schools with 581 staff	
Total of all staff in survey = 778	

### Staffing Levels and the National Curriculum Subjects

Having identified the number of small and large schools in the survey the staffing levels were considered in more detail. These levels of staffing in schools related to the

curriculum areas delegated to teachers (i.e. English, maths., science, technology, I.T., history, geography, art, music, P.E. and also R.E.) and to the posts of responsibility within the school.

Each school's staffing structure was examined in turn, and co-ordinator responsibilities for the 11 areas detailed above were listed for every school. It soon became apparent that there were many schools with post holders (HT, DHT or extra points on the pay scale of 3, 2 or 1) who had no responsibilities for any of the 11 curriculum areas. This is shown in table 2 below with the teachers on the Common Pay Scale (CPS), and non post-holders in this survey, included.

Table 2. Number of Post Holders with no curriculum areas of responsibility

	Small Schools		Large Schools	
	Total Staff in survey	Post Holders with no responsibility	Total Staff in survey	Post Holders with no responsibility
HT	20	14 (70%)	30	28 (98%)
DHT	20	0 ( 0%)	32	16 (50%)
3 scale pts.	7	1 (14%)	52	9 (17%)
2 scale pts.	39	0 ( 0%)	118	16 (14%)
1 scale pt.	45	0 ( 0%)	122	26 (21%)
Totals	131	15 (11%)	354	95 (27%)
Plus CPS	66	30 (45%)	227	144 (63%)
Totals	197	45 (23%)	581	239 (41%)
Total post holders with no curriculum area responsibility in the 11 responsibility areas = 110 (15 + 95).				

From Table 2 it could also be seen that there were various percentages of teachers in the schools in the survey who had posts of responsibility but who had no apparent curriculum responsibility within the schools. In total 110 post holders in the survey of 485 (131+354) altogether did not have an apparent curriculum responsibility. This calculates to 23%.

Three matters then emerged from Table 2. Firstly, that there had to be areas of responsibility other than those curriculum areas identified which were given to post holders as there were 110 post-holders (23%) apparently without a responsibility. Secondly, that there was a marked difference between the numbers of small (23%) and large (41%) school post holders with no responsibilities and thirdly, that the responsibilities of the head teachers of small and large primary schools appeared to be different. These three matters are now discussed.

### Other Curriculum Areas

Table 2 suggested that there had to be other responsibility areas of major importance that were being delegated to post holders and that if a fair analysis were to take place these areas would need to be included. There were, after all, 110 post holders with no apparent responsibility and this could not be the case as governors would be unlikely to make senior appointments that carried no responsibilities. Appointment panels look for value for money and expect teachers, generally other than those newly qualified, to take on responsibility for the scale points they are awarded.

On viewing the staffing structures, and looking in particular at those staff with responsibility points, there were indeed three other major areas of responsibility that quickly became apparent. The findings are shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Other main areas of Responsibility given to Post Holders

	Small Schools	Large Schools	Totals
In Service Training (INSET)	17	24	41
Special Educational Needs (SEN)	19	27	46
Assessment & Record Keeping (ARK)	16	25	41

These three areas of responsibility were all cross curricular and were obviously of great significance as the majority of schools had given them to post holders (INSET - 82%, SEN - 92% and ARK - 82%). It would also be expected that the rest of the 50 schools

had these posts of responsibility as the SEN post is a statutory requirement and INSET and ARK co-ordinators are essential in schools as can be seen from the details of their roles given below. For a variety of reasons, however, these three areas did not show up in a small percentage of schools in the survey. In order to explain their importance a brief description is now given of each area that has been outlined.

### *In Service Training*

Arranging the INSET needs of a school and its staff is a major task. Staff development is organised through INSET, the whole school plan often being written by the INSET co-ordinator and the production of the plan is one of the most important factors in whole school development. The curriculum co-ordinators, as argued in chapter 3, need opportunities to keep up-to-date with their subject areas and all members of staff must look to their own personal development, so the INSET co-ordinator's role includes detailing courses available and keeping records of those undertaking courses. Other parts of the role may include arrangements for staff meeting agendas, INSET days (with subject co-ordinators as appropriate) and managing the school Standards Fund budget.

### *Special Educational Needs*

Since the introduction of the *Code of Practice on the Identification and Assessment of Special Educational Needs* (DFE 1994) the workload of the SEN co-ordinator has increased significantly and the role has developed alongside this. Each school has to keep a register of those children who have special educational needs and detail their needs on records of concern and individual education plans. The SEN co-ordinator's role includes ensuring that the staff of the school keep these records up to date so that the children's needs are carefully documented throughout their lives in the school and are taken through the five stages of need (as detailed in the Code) as necessary. Liaison with educational psychologists, welfare officers and others, and the setting up of review meetings are also part of the role, and in some schools the SEN co-ordinator who does not have responsibility for a class, may teach those children with special needs.

### Assessment and Record Keeping

Since the implementation of the National Curriculum (DES 1989), schools have had to ensure that they have assessment and record keeping policies which detail how they assess the children's progress and how they keep significant records of that progress. The role of the ARK co-ordinator includes making arrangements to ensure that the staff of the school keep the necessary records and that there is a consistent approach to this and to the assessment of the children throughout the school. Standard assessment task results also have to be collated for the governors of the school to produce in the school brochure and in the annual report to parents.

### Major Areas of Responsibility

From the above it follows that these three cross-curricular areas need to be included in the analysis, alongside the curriculum areas mentioned above, giving a final list of 14 areas to be used later in this chapter for comparisons of schools.

Table 4. Major responsibilities within the Primary School

English	Music
Mathematics	Physical Education
Science	Religious Education
Technology	Art
Information Technology	INSET
History	SEN
Geography	Assessment and Record Keeping

### Differences between Post holders in Small and Large Schools

It could also be seen from table 2 that there was a marked difference between small schools and large schools in the numbers of post holders without subject area responsibility. Of the 197 staff in the small schools 15 (7.6%) had no responsibilities for subject areas and 14 of these were heads. Of the 581 staff in the large schools 95 (16.4%) had no subject area responsibility thus showing that the staff of small primary schools are much more likely to have definite responsibilities for curriculum subject areas. It was of course possible that these staff without subject area responsibilities

would have one of the three other areas of responsibility described above, but as most of those without responsibilities in the small schools were heads, it could well mean that the small school post holder who already has a curriculum responsibility would also be given one of the three other areas.

### Head teachers in the Small and Large Schools

On referring to the staffing structures of the small schools it could in fact be seen that 14 heads were without responsibility for a curriculum area in the small schools. None of these had responsibility for INSET, 3 took on responsibility for SEN and one had the role of ARK co-ordinator. This left 10 of the heads in the small schools with none of the 14 major areas of responsibility and, by implication, this meant that their staff had to take on these roles.

It was also to be noted from table 2 that the percentage of head teachers with no subject area responsibility differed in small and large schools. In the small schools 14 out of 20 heads (70%) did not take on these responsibilities compared to 28 out of 30 heads (93%) in the large schools. If the other three major areas are now taken into account it was found that, as stated above, 4 of the small school heads took on these roles, and by again referring to the staffing structures it could be found that in the large schools no heads took responsibility for INSET or ARK, and one took on the role of SEN co-ordinator. This left 10 heads of small schools (50%) and 27 heads of large schools (90%) with none of the 14 major areas of responsibility detailed earlier in this chapter.

It should also be recognised that in order to provide staff with non-contact time and time to work with colleagues, heads of small schools where there are no staff without class responsibility, may well find themselves teaching classes so that their staff can fulfil their roles. Indeed, as head teachers are in the end responsible for the entire curriculum, it is incumbent upon them to try to ensure that their staff can succeed with the tasks delegated to them.

It is not, however, the purpose of this research paper to compare the roles of head teachers in small and large primary schools, but the above findings may be of general interest and may warrant further research.



### The 14 major areas of responsibility

It could be seen from Table 1 that at its extremes 4 teaching staff in one school had to share the 14 major responsibilities whilst another school had 38 members available to take on these responsibilities.

It followed from this very simple analysis that the smaller the school the greater the number of responsibilities given to members of staff in the major areas of the curriculum and the greater the workload that these teachers were likely to have in terms of the production of schemes of work, arranging INSET, evaluating a variety of curriculum development issues, liaising with other schools on various areas of the curriculum and in keeping themselves 'up-to-date' in more than one responsibility area. It can be argued that co-ordinators in large schools have more staff to work with and evaluate in terms of the curriculum development in the school, but if one staff member in a large school has, say 21 staff to work with regarding one responsibility area, and one staff member in a small school has 7 staff members to work with in three responsibility areas, the workload is going to be roughly equivalent. In the large school it is possible for the co-ordinator to delegate some responsibilities and to organise working parties to help them. This is not so possible in the small school.

A further example of the problems of the small school co-ordinator could be found in the difficulty in attending the necessary courses. One small school missed out on the provision of an authority technology scheme because the co-ordinator in question was on another course relating to a further responsibility. Attendance at the technology course was obligatory in order for the school to be given the scheme. The school lost out due to its small size.

Of the 50 schools (see Table 1) 22 had fewer than 14 teaching staff (one to cover each of the major areas) and therefore expected their teachers to take on more than one area, especially when taking into account the head teachers and newly qualified teachers who did not take on these responsibilities. By calculating the total number of staff (from Table 1) in those schools with 14 staff or under (223 or 29%), and comparing this with the total number of staff in schools with more than 14 members (555 or 71%) it can be seen that 29% of the total staff in this particular authority are more likely to have to take on more responsibilities and that 71% are less likely to have

more than one major area, and may well not have one at all. It can also be seen, of course, that most of these 223 staff are in small schools.

The above factors can, of course, affect teacher morale and therefore the whole school ethos, and governors and head teachers have to remain aware of this.

### Posts of Responsibility in Small and Large Schools

It is now, therefore, of some interest to look at the number of posts of responsibility given to staff by the governors of the 50 schools to see if governors of smaller schools have managed to allocate an increased number of monitory allowances in an attempt to compensate for the heavier workloads.

The number of responsibilities taken on by members of staff varied enormously in the survey as it was often dependent on the number of peripheral responsibilities that were also delegated to staff. As appendix 1 shows the number of general responsibilities in a primary school are considerable and they have been studied previously in this research, so any comparisons of individual members of staff across schools is very difficult, if not impossible, as the number and type of responsibilities given invariably depend on the schools individual needs as seen by the staff and governors.

However, the numbers of posts of responsibility given in the 50 schools deserved some analysis, for the reasons given above, as follows. The spreadsheet shown as appendix 3 gives the details of the responsibility points given by governors in the 50 schools and comparisons are now made to show the average number of posts per size of school.

It must first be said that budgetary constraints can affect schools enormously and can have a major effect on staffing levels and on the ability of the governors to give allowances to staff. It is still hoped, however that the information gleaned from this part of the survey will at least give a general picture of the posts available to staff in schools of differing sizes at the time of the research.

The next part of the analysis was to look at the numbers of posts given throughout the schools in the survey for comparisons between schools.

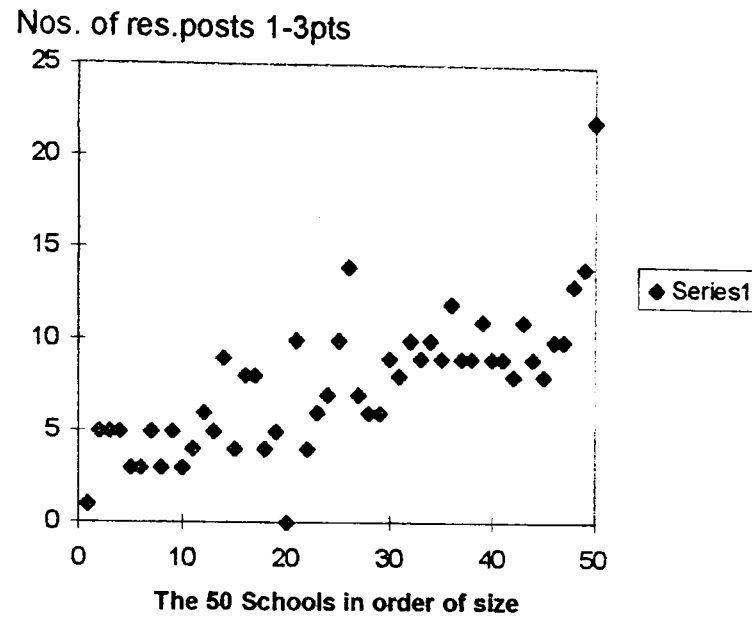


Chart 1 showing numbers of responsibility points per school

Chart 1 above shows the number of posts of 1 to 3 points of responsibility per school as related to the number of staff in the school (i.e. its size) taken from the information in appendix 3. This chart shows the expected trend that those schools with more staff have more posts of responsibility but on calculating the percentage number of posts given per school some interesting comparisons emerge as can be seen in the next chart.

The random scattering in Chart 2 below shows that there is enormous variation within the authority's schools. The highest number of responsibility points awarded are not necessarily in the large schools, neither are they necessarily in the small schools. This shows that there is no definite tendency for Governors to provide more posts of responsibility at any particular level of staffing in schools and the conclusion then has to be drawn that those staff in small schools do not tend to receive recompense for their extra workloads.

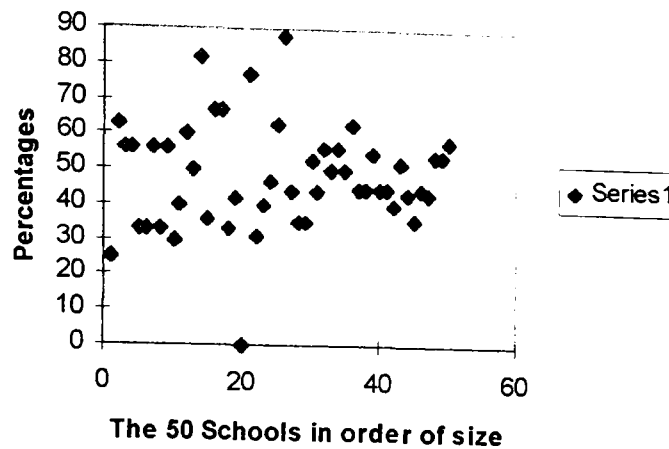


Chart 2 showing % no. of staff with posts

### School Priorities Regarding Co-ordinator Responsibilities

It is true to say that the activities of a co-ordinator can be affected by the priorities given in the annual school plan. Those co-ordinators whose subjects feature highly in the school plan may be more likely to have to organise INSET days, for example, or to write a new scheme of work, but each co-ordinator will have to take this on at one time or another through their years on the staff and so will expect to be more active during some years than others.

Equally well, there is always much to be done in monitoring the schemes of work that are in place, ensuring that colleagues are covering the National Curriculum in their planning, keeping themselves up-to-date in their subjects and briefing all staff on their findings and in managing the resources in their schools and their own responsibility budgets. Additionally, there are now many more requirements regarding assessment arrangements for each individual subject and each co-ordinator will have to ensure that these have been agreed with all staff and with the assessment co-ordinator and then monitor them to provide judgements for the school on their success.

### Different Approaches to Curriculum Co-ordination

A common theme amongst the 6 schools that had a different approach to curriculum co-ordination was the use of teams of staff to take on the co-ordination of curriculum areas. Points of responsibility were given for the leadership of these teams and all staff were involved in the team's work as part of a task group. Each group could be

expected to produce its own plan for the coming year, in relation to the overall school plan, and to produce the necessary policies for whole staff consideration. Most, but not all of these, were large schools who considered that no one person could monitor a curriculum area effectively in a large establishment.

One small school shared its responsibilities for the curriculum with its governors who were thus heavily involved in the production of policies and guidelines. The school were fortunate in having governors who could give a lot of their time.

It may be that the above examples of co-ordination will become more common in the future but for the present the vast majority of schools in the survey gave curriculum responsibilities to individuals as has been seen in the above analysis.

### Summary

- \* The survey showed that there were 20 small schools in the authority studied with a total of 197 teaching staff and 30 large schools with a total of 581 staff. This indicated that there were a significant number of schools who had to share out the many responsibilities in a primary school amongst a fewer number of teachers.
- \* On considering the responsibility areas to be used for comparison it was found that it was necessary to include the 3 major cross curricular areas of In Service Training, Special Educational Needs and Assessment and Record Keeping as these were frequently given to post holders in schools. This gave 14 major areas of responsibility to be considered.
- \* The analysis showed that 16.4% of post-holding staff in large schools had no subject area responsibility compared with 7.6% in small schools. This suggested that the smaller the school the greater were the number of subject responsibilities that would have to be given to staff and therefore there was a likelihood of a greater workload. Just under 29% of the LEA teaching staff are in small primary schools and will therefore be likely to have greater responsibilities in the subject areas.
- \* Head teachers in large schools were unlikely to take on a major responsibility area (90%), compared with small school head teachers who took on these responsibilities

(50%). It was also likely that a small school head teacher would have a teaching commitment if all the staff were classroom based.

- \* There seems to be no tendency for governors of small schools to provide recompense in terms of posts to compensate for increased workloads of teaching staff with responsibilities. This may be due to financial restraints or to a lack of knowledge regarding curriculum and other responsibilities by governors.
- \* Of the 56 returns out of a possible 66 schools in the LEA, 6 schools did not lend themselves easily to comparative analysis, but were none the less interesting in their different methods of curriculum co-ordination.
- \* It is clear that the staff in the significant number of small schools in the authority take on more responsibilities than the staff in the larger schools and that head teachers in small schools also have a greater workload. Governors are also not able to improve the situation by providing more scale points for small school co-ordinators.

## **Chapter 5: Case Study comparing teachers' curriculum responsibilities in small and large primary schools.**

### **Methodology**

#### **The Questionnaire**

Four teachers who had moved from small schools to large schools and vice versa (using the definition of a small school from Chapter 1) were chosen for this case study from the schools who had provided the staffing structures described in Chapter 4. It was recognised that this was a small sample of teachers but their views were of value to the research. They were sent simple questionnaires (appendix 4) prior to interview, regarding comparisons between the small and large schools that they had experienced in their careers. This gave them some understanding of the purpose of the research and gave them an opportunity to consider the issues before the interview. Whilst they were asked to try to put aside the effects of any promotion they may have received by moving school and only consider responsibilities outside their class commitments, it was recognised that this was difficult to do and that some of the data collected may therefore be unreliable as it was difficult to divorce promotion from a move to a new school. They were also asked to give particular consideration to their curriculum co-ordinator roles as defined in the previous chapter as the 14 major areas of responsibility.

The questionnaire was devised to allow comparisons of the sizes of schools that the participants had worked in, their curriculum and other main responsibilities and their points on the common pay scale. They were also asked to detail the work that they had undertaken on their curriculum areas using the criteria set out in Chapter 3 for curriculum leadership (National Curriculum Council 1989a: 12). The covering letter sent to the participants (Appendix 5) detailed the 14 areas of curriculum responsibility as defined in Chapter 4, Table 4, as the major responsibilities within the primary school. This allowed the teachers concerned to define their own curriculum responsibilities more clearly for the purposes of this research.

## The Interviews

The four teachers concerned were interviewed at their own schools and the same set of questions were used in each case. The conversations were recorded and then transcribed as a record of the research.

The questions they were asked at interview were to deal with: time commitments, workload and effectiveness as these were three areas of the co-ordinator's role that had been mentioned as problematical for co-ordinators towards the end of Chapter 3. It was envisaged that this would then provide some evidence for discussion later. Each of these headings was then discussed further at the interviews.

### Time Commitments

The four teachers were asked to discuss the time given to their co-ordinator role before school, after school and at lunch times in both of their schools. They were also asked how much non-contact time they were allocated each week in each school and to discuss how this was used. Finally they were asked for details of the time they spent working on their co-ordinator role at home in their two situations.

### Workload

Interviews on workload began with discussion on the number of the defined responsibilities the teachers had in each school and was then developed into discussion about the paperwork involved with their role and the time they had to see and help colleagues in their classrooms or the schools as a whole. The final part of this section discussed the teachers' perceived levels of stress relating to their co-ordinator roles in both schools.

### Effectiveness

The participants were asked to consider whether they felt that they were effective in promoting their area(s) of the curriculum within their schools and whether they found it easier in a large or small school. They were also asked about whether they felt they



had more or less influence in each of the schools they had taught in. It was recognised that it would be difficult to draw conclusions from the opinions given.

### Analysis of the Questionnaires

For this analysis the results of the questionnaires on the criteria for curriculum leadership from Chapter 3 are arranged into pairs: firstly those two teachers who had moved from large to small schools, and secondly those who had moved from small to large schools.

#### *Moving from a large primary school to a small primary school*

For the first pair of teachers, the small schools that they had moved to were both one form entry and had approximately half the number of pupils and staff that their larger school had. Their responsibilities had increased from one major area to two or three (see Chapter 1; Waugh 1990b). They had worked on the production of schemes in both schools but had been unable to do as much monitoring and evaluating in the smaller school as they had not had as much non-contact time (see Chapter 3; HMI 1990,1992). Both had been able to undertake their own INSET by taking part in courses both in school time and after school (see Chapter 3; Alexander et al., DES 1992), and they had arranged INSET for other staff through INSET days or staff meetings. Neither had liaised with other schools but they had both managed resources in their schools through budgets that they were responsible for.

The above suggested that the two teachers concerned had taken on a greater workload by moving to a smaller school but that they had been able to continue with their own development through courses and arranging INSET for others.

#### *Moving from a small primary school to a large primary school*

The second pair had varying experiences, one having moved from a village school with four staff to a school with twenty and the other from a school with nine staff to one with twenty-two and with accordingly increased numbers of pupils. In the first case the number of responsibilities had decreased from three to one with the teacher concerned remaining on the same salary point, whilst in the second case promotion had been

taken and the new responsibilities were found to be very similar to those the teacher had whilst in the smaller school. The teachers had different experiences in working with schemes of work as the first had taken on an area of the curriculum where a scheme was already in place whilst the second was developing a scheme of work as part of his new responsibilities. Both teachers had been able to work alongside colleagues in both their schools (see Chapter 3; OFSTED 1994: 4) and they had liaised with other schools in their areas. They had also had the opportunity to evaluate their area of the curriculum in the larger school, through release from their classes for this purpose, and both had continued to undertake their own INSET through courses. Only the second had arranged INSET for other staff as his area of the curriculum was still being developed and was therefore a school priority, whereas the other teacher with a scheme already in place had no need to arrange INSET for the present. Both had managed the resources in their schools through budgets.

The above shows two teachers with some different experiences, particularly in the development of curriculum areas. The first had a monitoring role for her area of the curriculum as the school had already developed the area, whereas the second had a more demanding role. This can often be the case in schools, as discussed in Chapter 4, as priorities will always affect the workload of teachers, but all curriculum responsibilities carry the same requirements as detailed in the questionnaire and they will come to each co-ordinator in turn as the years go by. Also, the responsibility for monitoring a curriculum area that is not a school development priority must not be underestimated as it may need to become a priority sooner than expected if it is not reviewed frequently to ensure its effectiveness (see Chapter 4).

In order to monitor their curriculum areas, both had been given some specific time for this purpose, either through the weekly school timetable or separate funding (e.g. Standards Fund).

### Overview

From the above it can be seen that there was generally less opportunity, when working in the smaller schools, for monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum as these teachers were not given the release time to undertake this. Also, they had more than

one area to monitor which made the task even more difficult, so it needed to be undertaken in different ways (see Chapter 3; Dean 1987; Frisby 1989).

For the teachers moving from a small school the new school's priorities had an effect on the workload and had meant that one teacher had not found moving to a larger school any different, whereas the other had found it easier.

### Analysis of the Interviews

In this analysis the teachers interviewed will be quoted and will therefore be denoted as the following: LSa and LSb, who moved from large to small schools, and SLa and SLb who moved from small to large schools.

### *Teachers moving from a large to a small primary school*

#### Time Commitments

Both LSa and LSb stated that they had to spend less time after school on curriculum matters whilst in their large schools as they had been allocated more non-contact time than was available in the smaller schools. LSb said that "...in the larger school I had a whole afternoon a week to spend on my co-ordinator's role, now I have about one hour." This had allowed them time to organise their curriculum area but they also pointed out that they had more responsibilities in the smaller school with less time to fulfil their commitments. In the larger school it was also easier to get release as (LSa) "...there was always support to go into your class" and this allowed the co-ordinator time to monitor the curriculum, whereas in the small school LSa stated that "I've got no-one to come and relieve me to go into classes..." and this made monitoring his curriculum area difficult, as discussed in chapter 3.

The views of LSa and LSb were, then, very much centred around the amount of non-contact time that they got in school and the effect that this had on the time they had to spend on curriculum matters before and after school. The importance of this in all schools has been discussed in chapters 3 and 4.

Lunch times in the smaller schools were seen as more hectic as there were fewer adults around to share the load (LSb: "[In the larger school]...there were just more people around..."). Both thought that in the larger schools they had more time to themselves during the lunch hour.

Time spent working at home was also directly affected by the amount of non-contact time available in school, so both teachers found that they now had no choice but to take home work on curriculum matters. LSb stated that she had a team of seven staff to work with on her responsibility area in the large school, and that she was therefore able to delegate much of the workload to others which made her role much easier, but she could not do this in her present school as there were not enough staff.

### Workload

In discussion on responsibilities both teachers found that they had at least double the number of responsibilities since their moves and that the other staff in the school were in the same position as found by Waugh (1990b). They found that this meant that the small school had to prioritise very carefully as they could not develop all curriculum areas at once otherwise, "You've got everyone running around doing a little bit of the jigsaw puzzle and it never seems to get put together" (LSa).

Both LSa and LSb felt that larger schools had a big advantage as regards the amount of paperwork produced as they could arrange for working parties to be responsible for draft schemes of work "...which was quite time effective..." (LSb). Workloads could be shared in the larger school and then the 'jigsaw' could be put together at whole staff meetings and the school could move on to the next development. LSb also expressed the view that in the small school, co-ordinators had to do the job by themselves as, whilst they got advice from others and could consult at staff meetings, other staff could not give them much time on their own as they had their own workloads to consider.

Whilst the view was expressed that it was easier in the large school to use non-contact time to see other staff as there was more of it, it was more difficult to organise as there were so many classes to see and it was therefore hard to know what was happening throughout the school. LSb said that "...Organisation-wise and awareness-wise it was harder in the large school than the small school..." LSa agreed that it was easier to get

a feeling of what was going on in the smaller school, but if the co-ordinator had no non-contact time it was impossible to really get to know what was happening in the classrooms regarding their area of responsibility as "...day-to-day business always seemed to take over" (LSa).

It can be seen here that both teachers again have the feeling that they need more non-contact time to fulfil their curriculum responsibilities and this seems to reinforce the case that has been discussed in previous chapters.

As regards stress, both teachers agreed that whilst there was less time to do things in the small school and co-ordinators always felt under enormous pressure, there were often communication problems in the larger schools which could cause considerable stress throughout the school and that small schools had an advantage in this area by having fewer people to inform of events. LSb stated that in the large school "...there were stress elements of being so big, the communication was very difficult...". In the larger schools, therefore, it was more difficult to ensure that everyone knew what was happening each day.

### Effectiveness

Both teachers expressed the view that co-ordinators needed to be well organised to be effective in the larger school. Co-ordinators had more available time to do their jobs but "...you had to be really aware of what you were doing - you had to organise yourself properly because there were more classes" (LSb). In the smaller school co-ordinators had not got the opportunities to explain all they needed at staff meetings as there were so many priorities and they were "...always left with that feeling...if only I'd had a bit more time to do things in sufficient depth" (LSa). As discussed in Chapter 3 Alexander et al. (DES 1992: 25) co-ordinators lack effectiveness in many schools be they small or large.

As far as influence over other members of staff was concerned both teachers found that it was often easier to have influence in the smaller school as there were fewer people and they knew them well enough to discuss problems with them. Co-ordinators simply had fewer people to see and this made it easier to "...pick up the problems..." (LSb) than in the larger school where all sorts of things could be going on that a co-ordinator

had little knowledge about. It was always more difficult to communicate successfully in a large school and co-ordinators were therefore less able to feel that they could influence staff in the teaching of their curriculum area. If they did not have a good system of communication "...then you could get lost very easily" (LSb). Chapter 1 of this paper discusses one of the advantages of a small school (Waugh 1990c) as finding whole school planning easier with fewer staff members, and the above seems to bear this out.

Again it was recognised that it would be difficult to draw conclusions from the opinions given above but two matters have arisen, the use of working parties and school communication systems, which will deserve further exploration in the next chapter.

### *Teachers moving from a small to a large primary school*

#### Time Commitments

The experiences of SLa and SLb were similar as far as the use of time was concerned but for different reasons. SLa had found that whilst there had been more courses to go on at the smaller school ("...I was history, P.E., science and music at one point...") in order to cover the curriculum areas she was responsible for, there were now after-school clubs which she had to run in the large school and so her commitments were very similar. SLb had found that he had to spend just as much time after school and at lunch time on his curriculum areas in his new school, as he stated, "I need to get round more and check resources and give people advice and produce more activity ideas." All parts of the role of the curriculum co-ordinator as discussed in chapter 3. It was also agreed that lunch times in the small school were more hectic as there always seemed to be children who needed help from a teacher for one reason or another.

As regards non-contact time the situations differed with SLb having less time allocated on a regular basis in the large school he had moved to and he missed the regular opportunity he had to organise his responsibility area. On the other hand he had just had five days of non-contact time in a row "...which had been to observe things and which did involve writing up observations for a detailed report". SLa had found moving to a large school very beneficial as she had never had any non-contact time

before and was now using this regular time to great effect in monitoring her area. With only one area of the curriculum to manage the more effective a co-ordinator should be, as discussed in chapter 3.

Comparisons of time spent working at home were very similar for both these teachers who had found that they still had to do a considerable amount of work at home relating to their curriculum responsibilities or to their class preparation if they had to cover a lot of curriculum work after school. SLb stated, "...I'm getting home exhausted and then I'm planning and thinking about lots of issues, there seem to be more here that I have time to deal with...". It must be remembered from previous discussion in this chapter that SLb had a school priority area of the curriculum as his responsibility whereas, SLa had more of a monitoring role but that she still had to do much of this at home as she also had a class to prepare for after school.

### Workload

It will also be remembered from previous discussion that the number of responsibilities for SLb had remained the same in the move to the large school, although there had been a further responsibility point awarded, but for SLa there had been a reduction from three responsibilities in the small school to one in the large school for the same number of points on the pay scale. This matter was discussed in chapter 4 where it was seen that the number of responsibility points in schools can vary enormously as can the number of responsibilities in general that are taken on by teachers (Chapter 2). SLb certainly felt that his workload had increased as "...there seem to be a lot more meetings and that takes up a lot of time". SLa felt her workload in general had decreased as she had only one responsibility.

As far as paperwork was concerned SLa and SLb expressed the view that the situation was very similar in both sizes of school for the production of schemes of work and policies. The problem of communication and the need for many memos in the larger school did mean that they had seen an increase in paperwork in this area. "It just seems that the only way to communicate in a school this big is to write memos and everything has to be minuted so everyone knows what happened..." (LSb). This is borne out by the previous participant's views on communication in schools and was discussed briefly in chapter 1.

With no non-contact time for her in the small school and finding break times very busy with children, LSa was now finding it much easier to see colleagues and spend time discussing curriculum matters in her large school. LSb was missing the regular non-contact time he had used to visit other classes in his small school: "...it was great because it was that time I used to go into any class in the school and actually see what was going on..." This evidence strongly supports the importance of regular non-contact time for all curriculum co-ordinators as discussed in chapters 1 and 3 at length.

Both teachers thought that, in their experience, stress levels were higher the larger the number of curriculum areas one had, but SLb also mentioned that a difficult class could also raise stress levels. Having more than one area of the curriculum to co-ordinate had made each teacher feel that they were "...a Jack-of-all-trades, master-of-none" (LSa).

### Effectiveness

There were different views as regards effectiveness. On the one hand the view was expressed that in a small school staff had to get on with each other and "...as a co-ordinator I was really well supported and if people didn't agree it never became an issue it was just discussed" (LSb). This is discussed in chapter 1 and is mentioned by Waugh (Galton et al. 1990). In the larger school "... you were so busy juggling people's feelings that you couldn't feel really effective" (LSb). On the other hand, having to take on so many areas in the small school, some of which had required specialist knowledge, had led LSa to have a real sense of frustration whereas in the larger school she was now in, there were teachers with the required specialist knowledge. This was discussed in chapter 1 of this research (and by HMI 1992) and is also mentioned in chapter 3.

The ability to influence others was felt by LSa to be much easier in the large school as there was a more organised set up for reporting on courses co-ordinators had undertaken: "...It happens in a more formal way in a larger school, in a smaller school you sort of mentioned things in passing..." (LSa). LSb felt that he could have influence (in the large school) as long as he was assertive enough "...and talked about things that had to change". Expertise was also seen as important if a co-ordinator wished to influence others. In a large school LSa felt that curriculum co-ordinators were seen as



experts, whereas in the small school "...everyone had as much knowledge as everyone else and it was just a case of handing the areas out - who wants to do what this year?" The issue of co-ordinator influence was discussed earlier in chapters 1 and 3.

### Summary

### Methodology

- \* A questionnaire asking for comparisons on teaching in small and large schools had been sent to participants in the case study prior to interview to give the purpose of the research and to allow for preparation for the interview.
- \* The questions asked at interview related to time commitments, workload and effectiveness as these had arisen in chapter 3 as problems for co-ordinators.

### Questionnaires

- \* The questionnaires initially suggested that the two teachers moving from large to small schools had taken on a greater workload. The same suggestions were not found in the cases of the teachers moving from small to large schools as their experiences differed, with workload reducing in one case but remaining much the same in the other.

### Interviews

- \* Teachers moving from large to small schools had found a lack non-contact time to be a problem for them as they felt it had increased their time spent working outside school hours. They had also noted that their responsibilities had increased and that they did not have as many colleagues as previously to share the load. Both teachers did feel that communication was easier in the small school. The less staff they had to see allowed them to be more effective and have greater influence than they had in their previous schools.
- \* Those moving from small to large schools had different experiences in terms of workload. One had found life easier whilst the other had felt the pressures to be

much the same. Similarly to the previous two teachers they felt that communication was easier in the small school unless it was very well organised in the larger school.

- \* Each school sets priorities for the year ahead in its school plan and the depth of a co-ordinator's responsibilities may therefore vary from year to year.
- \* Monitoring the curriculum in the classroom or school as a whole is very difficult without adequate release.
- \* It is very difficult, for small school co-ordinators in particular, to gain enough expertise in their curriculum areas of responsibility.

## Chapter 6. Discussion and Conclusions

### Overview

The purpose of this study has been to look at comparisons between small and large schools in terms of the workloads of curriculum co-ordinators. This has been achieved through a literature survey, working with a group of head teachers, a survey of the primary schools in a London borough and a case study involving practising teachers. A brief resume of these will be given before discussing the matters raised in them.

### Small and Large Schools

The first task was, necessarily, to define what was meant by a small school and what defined a large school by looking at the available literature (see Chapter 1) and discussing the various definitions that were to be found.

There were a great variety of definitions, from those in the Plowden Report of 1967 suggesting up to 50 pupils, to that of the then DES who defined the size of a small school as having a staff of up to eleven teachers (Ch.1, p.2).

In between these two were many other definitions that had been used for the purposes of research projects, but the DES definition affects all schools as this is now used by all education authorities to determine the level of funding for schools under the Local Management of Schools Act of 1988 and therefore became the definition to be used in the present research.

### Advantages and Disadvantages

When looking at the advantages and disadvantages of the small school the following issues arose for further discussion:

- \* non-contact time needed by co-ordinators
- \* intimate knowledge of the children and school by teachers in small schools
- \* funding of the school by the governors
- \* subject expertise necessary in a primary school

- \* curriculum breadth and balance needed in the appointment of teaching staff
- \* interpersonal skills of teachers in the small school staffroom
- \* appointing staff who are able to be flexible in terms of their curriculum responsibilities
- \* small school planning and communication as easier than that in the large school

### Teacher Responsibilities

As the study was to look at the role of the curriculum co-ordinator in the primary school, it was also necessary to define this role. A group of head teachers therefore looked at the responsibilities of teachers in primary schools (see Chapter 2) so that the curriculum responsibilities could be isolated.

The work they undertook led to a clearer understanding of the role of the primary school teacher outside the classroom (see Appendix 1) and to the conclusion that the role was an extensive one involving seven particular areas of responsibility. These were: Curriculum, Departmental, Representative, Extra-curricular, Pastoral, Statutory and Administrative (Ch.2, p.1). All the many responsibilities discussed by the head teachers' group could be detailed in one or another of the above areas and might well warrant further research as they do highlight the complexities of the primary teacher's role outside the daily classroom responsibilities.

Points for further discussion are therefore:

- \* the variety of responsibilities that the primary teacher has
- \* the sharing of responsibilities amongst staff in small and large schools

### Curriculum Co-ordination

The chapter on teacher responsibilities allowed the role of the curriculum co-ordinator to be isolated and the details of this responsibility to be looked at more closely.

Using a literature survey curriculum co-ordination was discussed starting with the origins of the role which, it appeared, had been around for many years in one form or

another (Ch.3,p.1). Plowden had discussed 'teachers expert in the main field of learning' in 1967 and these teachers were variously described in many papers and reports until the name of curriculum co-ordinator emerged as the favourite, around 1989, when the National Curriculum Council defined the main aspects of the role as: detailing schemes of work, working alongside colleagues, arranging school based INSET, evaluating curriculum development, liaising with other schools, keeping up-to-date and managing resources (Ch.3,p.2).

The above responsibilities for curriculum leadership were then used as the basis for looking at the co-ordinator's role in more detail through the literature survey and with the workloads of co-ordinators in small and large schools in mind (Ch.3,p.3), and the following matters were raised for consideration:

- \* non-contact time needed by co-ordinators
- \* the number of responsibilities per member of staff in the small school
- \* prioritising class responsibility versus responsibility for curriculum areas
- \* appointing experts to the small school in the curriculum areas where there is most need
- \* study in more than one area necessary for all staff of the small school
- \* advantages of staff ownership of schemes and policies
- \* paperwork and administration required for the production of schemes and policies
- \* availability of co-ordinators to liaise with and work with other members of staff
- \* effectiveness of the co-ordinator in fulfilling their role
- \* the expansion of the role of co-ordinator and the accountability since the introduction of the National Curriculum

### Survey of Schools

Fifty-six schools had replied to a request for their staffing structures detailing the curriculum responsibilities of their teaching staff and this information was used to study the differences between responsibilities given in small and large schools (see Chapter 4).

The National Curriculum subjects were used as a basis for the study but it soon became apparent that there were three other major areas that needed to be considered as curriculum responsibilities for co-ordinators in small and large schools as the vast majority of schools had allocated them (Ch.4,p.3). These areas were: INSET, Special Needs and Assessment and Record Keeping and were then included in the study of responsibilities given in schools.

Analysis of the survey then showed that the staff in the small schools could expect more curriculum responsibilities (Ch.4,p.5) and that head teachers in small schools also took on more of these responsibilities than their colleagues in the large schools (Ch.4,p.6). It also showed that governors were unlikely to give extra points of responsibility in small schools to compensate for the extra responsibilities.

It was also pointed out that school priorities could affect the co-ordinator's workload at any particular time (Ch.4,p.8).

Issues raised were therefore:

- \* the number of responsibilities for staff of small schools compared with large schools
- \* school priorities in terms of the load on different co-ordinators at different times
- \* head teacher responsibilities for taking on the role of co-ordinator in the small school
- \* governors' ability to provide responsibility points to teachers who take on curriculum responsibilities

### Case Study

This involved four teachers who had moved between small and large schools and was undertaken to get a flavour of the opinions of teachers in these schools regarding their curriculum co-ordinator role and their perceived workloads (see Chapter 5).

The questioning of these co-ordinators was based on some of the problems that had arisen from Chapter 3 (p.7 and 8) as matters of concern for co-ordinators: time commitments, workload and effectiveness.

Issues that arise that warrant further discussion are:

- \* non-contact time and its importance to co-ordinators
- \* monitoring of the curriculum in action by co-ordinators
- \* increased responsibilities in a small school for all staff
- \* school priorities as regards curriculum revision as detailed in the development plan
- \* sharing the load in the small school amongst fewer teachers than in the large school
- \* time to fulfil the role of co-ordinator
- \* expertise of the whole staff in the primary school
- \* communication problems in the large school where there are more staff to be kept informed

### Conclusions

From all the issues detailed above that have been raised from the previous chapters, it can be seen that some common themes emerge for discussion.

#### *Non-contact Time*

Chief amongst these themes is the matter of non-contact time, or rather the lack of it, in primary schools. There can be no doubt from the evidence provided above that there is an urgent need for the specific provision in primary schools of time set aside for curriculum co-ordinators to fulfil their roles through being able to monitor their specific areas of responsibility effectively. As OFSTED (1997) state in their report on subject specialism at key stage 2, 'The lack of non-contact time is the most significant constraint on the effective use of subject expertise in most schools'. Without the ability to work alongside colleagues in their classrooms, co-ordinators will never really know how staff are managing their subject teaching and whether the children are progressing satisfactorily. Nias (1989) discussed with teachers their frustration with the

impossibility of their co-ordinator role and recommended more non-contact time for staff but little appears to have changed in the following years.

### *The Number of Responsibilities*

The above issue of non-contact time applies to small and large school co-ordinators, but is a greater problem for small school co-ordinators who have more than one area of the curriculum as a responsibility, as the expertise that they are required to have may be two or three times that of the large school co-ordinator. These small school co-ordinators will have to be able to study more, share the information, prepare the necessary paperwork and they will not have sufficient time to do this properly. Problems will also arise regarding the responsibility that the teacher feels towards their class of children, and parents may also be concerned about this; but if the curriculum is to be managed in the small school then a culture change, where parents do not expect their children to be with the same teacher all week, will be necessary. One of the ways forward in this respect would seem to be the provision of a further member of staff for each small school. This teacher, as a permanent member of staff, would know the children and parents and could be an additional source of expertise as well as a built-in supply teacher.

At times, of course, the school's priorities as detailed in their development plans will vary and some co-ordinators will find themselves with less to do than others, but in a small school it is less likely to be the case as head teachers will try to share out the responsibilities for the main priorities throughout the staff in order that no one person is taking on too much. It may therefore mean that the staff have to change their responsibilities from year to year, but if teachers who are willing to be flexible have been appointed then this is manageable. Head teachers also may have to be willing to take on co-ordinator roles at times in order that each person on the staff has an equal workload commensurate with their status.

### *Funding*

The issue of funding is a very real one for school governors and LEAs (Southworth 1994) for whom the provision of good teaching staff is a priority. In addition to allocating enough of the budget to allow a teacher for each class they have to be aware



of the need for other members of staff in the school to be available to release teachers to fulfil their co-ordinator roles, whether it be in the school or taking part in in-service training during school hours. This is true for small and large schools and consideration also has to be given to the points of responsibility given to co-ordinators for their workload. It would appear from the evidence provided in this study that there is very little continuity between schools in this area of funding as they vary enormously in the number of responsibility points they allow no matter what their size.

### Expertise

Providing the expertise necessary for any primary school to be effective is also a role that the governors have, albeit with substantial advice and input from the head teacher. Without this expertise the school curriculum may lack breadth and balance and as the staff of a school will need help and advice in all subject areas throughout a school year, it is the governors' and head teacher's responsibility to make this available if at all possible. It can prove difficult in the small school to give priority to breadth and balance where the appointment of a teacher can depend very much on ensuring that the candidate is going to fit the school team, as interpersonal skills in the small school are of prime importance. It may mean, of course, that it results in the school being short of expertise in a particular curriculum area, but governors and head teachers have to make these difficult choices based on what they believe is best for the school at that time.

### Communication

This is an area where the small school has an advantage over the large school in that all staff can know each other and the children and parents well. Successful communication is essential in any organisation, but its efficiency will often depend on the number of people who need to be kept informed. The fewer people who need to be told, the less time it will take and the happier people will feel knowing that they have the necessary knowledge to do their jobs properly.

Planning the curriculum may also be easier in the small primary school as co-ordinators have fewer people to see and agreement on policies can be easier to obtain. Staff can feel ownership of the schemes of work they use if they have agreed them in person and

this may well be easier in a small staffroom where everyone should have the opportunity to have their say.

### *Sharing Responsibilities*

The large school has certain advantages regarding the ability to share the wide variety of responsibilities that teachers in primary schools have. Not only is it likely that the large school teachers will only have one curriculum responsibility, but there will also be the likelihood that they will be able to arrange for working parties of teachers within the school to be able to work with them on their curriculum areas and so take on part of the workload. In this way the paperwork and administration of the role can be reduced as first drafts of policies and schemes of work will often have been written by a team of people. In the small school one person will generally take on the complete role themselves purely being able to consult at staff meetings before having to produce all the necessary paperwork.

### *Effectiveness*

Very few co-ordinators are going to believe that they are truly effective unless they have the time they need to fulfil their role. From the evidence in this research it would appear that there is much room for improvement, but also that teachers feel very frustrated by the lack of funds to provide them with the time they need, and by the criticisms they get from OFSTED and government regarding the need to raise standards. Russell and Metcalf (1997) discuss the recent OFSTED findings about middle management which make it clear that more time is needed for co-ordinators and it seems quite clear to me from this study that no curriculum co-ordinator can do their job properly without non-contact time whether it be in a large or small school, and it is likely to be more difficult in the small school due to the number of responsibilities there are to share. Without adequate funding curriculum co-ordinators cannot be held accountable for their greatly expanded role since the introduction of the National Curriculum, and if government wish standards to be raised then they will have to find ways to provide these funds. 'Where co-ordinators could facilitate learning they had a more powerful impact on the curriculum than when they could not' (Nias, Southworth, Campbell 1992: 227). The evidence appears to be available but it is not acted upon.

### Concluding Remarks

From this research it can be seen that the number of curriculum responsibilities taken on by curriculum co-ordinators in small schools is greater than in the large school. There is evidence to suggest therefore that there is a case for increasing support for the small school curriculum co-ordinator in order to deal with the greater responsibilities. As a head teacher of a small primary school it appears to me to be very clear that without funding being made available to small schools, through the LMS scheme, to allow for regular release of co-ordinators from their classrooms, then little will change and OFSTED will continue to say that curriculum co-ordinators do not effectively monitor their curriculum areas. It could be argued that through the provision of extra teaching personnel the expertise in the small school could be increased and the standards of the children's attainment and progress will be raised as a consequence; this could be an area for further research. I do hope that the research that I have undertaken in this area has provided some evidence to support the view that priorities for funding must be set with the curriculum co-ordination of small primary schools firmly in mind.

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Source: Enfield Small Primary Schools Headteachers Group

Teaching Staff Responsibilities within a Small Primary School :

Areas of curriculum responsibility

Equal opportunities

Language

INSET

PE and games

Assessment and Record Keeping

Art and Display

Science

Environmental studies

Technology

Music

Special Educational Needs

RE and multicultural education

Geography

History

PSHE

Information Technology

Mathematics

Areas of departmental responsibility

Infant co-ordination

Junior co-ordination

Departmental meetings

Departmental working parties

Pastoral care

Liaison with administrative staff

Liaison with lunch time staff

## Assemblies

### Areas of representative responsibility

Management Team

Working parties

Courses

Governors meetings

Governors sub-committee meetings

Professional Development Centre (Teachers Centre)

Parents Association liaison

Partnership schools meetings

Community and industry links

Cross phase liaison

Committees and Forums

### Areas of extra-curricular responsibility

Competitive sports arrangements

Visits, outings, shows

School journeys

After school clubs

Fund Raising

### Areas of pastoral responsibility

Child protection

Home-school liaison

Parental interviews

Counselling

Behaviour policies and guidelines

Reward systems

Teacher tutor for NQTs

Student liaison

Staff induction

### Areas of statutory responsibility

Sex education  
Equal opportunities  
Child protection  
Health and Safety  
National Curriculum  
Assessment and Testing  
SEN Code of Practice  
Appraisal  
Reporting to Parents  
School Prospectus  
Registration of pupils

### Areas of administrative responsibility

Organisation of duties and rotas  
Arrangements for parental consultation  
Arrangements for students  
Curriculum area budgets  
School Development Plan  
T.V. and Radio broadcasts

## SMALL PRIMARY SCHOOLS HEADS GROUP

### A Report on the Workload of Teachers in Small Primary Schools

The above group, of sixteen head teachers, was set up in June 1995 to investigate the workload and responsibilities of teachers in small primary schools and to convey their findings to the LEA so that members and officers could be made aware of the particular problems that teachers in small schools have in relation to their responsibilities outside the classroom.

#### Definition of a Small School

The DES, in Circular No 7/88 gives the numbers of teachers in the school as the definition of a small school in their recommendations under the *Education Reform Act: Local management of Schools (LMS)*;

It will be for LEAs to determine which schools should have their budgets adjusted to reflect this factor (small school salary protection), the extent of cost variations to be taken into account, and the degree of protection or limitation of gain to be provided. In general, however, the Secretary of State envisages that the degree of protection or limitation of gain should be tapered according to the size of the school, so that the budget shares of schools which might be expected to have ten or more teaching staff (excluding the head teacher and Deputy) are not adjusted to take this into account.

Enfield Education Department used this definition in the production of the LMS formula for the Authority, and Primary schools are funded in this way to partly alleviate the problems of actual salary costs.

#### Teacher Responsibilities

The above factor assists small schools in the appointment of staff at higher points on the pay scale but does not help small schools to share out the staffing responsibilities that are found in all schools regardless of size. as can be seen from the attached appendix 1. These responsibilities are considerable and it is plain to see that a small staff will have greater difficulties in coping with this sort of workload than larger schools. To illustrate this an example is given as Appendix 2.

Of particular concern to head teachers is the workload which surrounds the Curriculum Co-ordinators role. There are nine curriculum areas to be covered; English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Art, Music, Physical Education and Technology with

Religious Education as a further area. In addition there are four cross-curricular areas of major importance; Special Educational Needs, Equal Opportunities, INSET and Assessment and Record Keeping.

Each of these fourteen areas of responsibility can be taken on by one person in larger schools which means that the efficient undertaking of the following tasks, as defined by the National Curriculum Council in 1989, will be more successful because they have more time to give.

Curriculum Leadership Roles:

- \* detailing schemes of work in the light of the programmes of study;
- \* working alongside colleagues;
- \* arranging school based INSET;
- \* monitoring and evaluating curriculum development;
- \* liaising with other schools;
- \* keeping "up-to-date" in the particular subject;
- \* managing resources;
- \* OFSTED preparation and action planning;
- \* attendance at partnership meetings.

With the exception of item two, where co-ordinators in large schools are bound to have greater workload, all other items above will need the same time and attention, and research by David Waugh in 1990 showed that:

The small staffs of some schools and the lack of finance for posts of responsibility have ensured that the smaller schools have fewer teachers with subject responsibilities....in some small schools, each teacher accepts responsibility for two, three or even four subjects without receiving additional salary for doing so.

In the *Curriculum Organisation and Classroom Practice in Primary Schools* report by Alexander, Rose and Woodhead (1992) they stated, when discussing curriculum co-ordination, that; 'There is, moreover, the problem of the small school, where it is unreasonable to expect that two or three teachers can be expert in ten subjects to the depth now required.' and we would contend that this applies to all small schools as defined above. Also, as HMI pointed out from their own surveys in their annual reports of 1990 and 1992, it is essential that non-contact time be increased.

As can be seen from the above information, additional funding to release staff for non-contact time is essential if curriculum co-ordinators are to be able to fulfil their roles. HMI in 1989 believed that, 'By one route or another around 10% non-contact time for each teacher is needed.' but this has yet to come about and workloads have not reduced, indeed they have increased with the demands of the SEN Code of Practice.

The House of Commons Education Committee stated in 1994 that; 'What we believe is most urgently required is sufficient staffing to allow flexibility in deploying teachers for the kind of activities required by primary education.' and they contend that curriculum co-ordination is a major activity.

### Conclusion

We therefore ask that the LEA take into account the above evidence and put in motion considerations for alterations to the LMS formula to allow for an increase in the numbers of staff in small schools for two particular reasons:

- a) to allow for the workload surrounding responsibilities, especially curriculum areas, to be shared more equably;
- b) to allow for more non-contact time so that teaching staff can fulfil their co-ordinator roles.

We would be most grateful, therefore, if the above information could be put before Members and Governors for consideration in the Budget cycle of 1997/98.

Jack Bacon, Convenor, Small Schools Heads Group  
Capel Manor Primary School, Enfield. July 1996.

## Appendix 1

Source: Enfield Small Primary Schools Headteachers Group

### Teaching Staff Responsibilities within a Small Primary School :

#### Areas of curriculum responsibility

Equal opportunities  
Language  
INSET  
PE and games  
Assessment and Record Keeping  
Art and Display  
Science  
Environmental studies  
Technology  
Music  
Special Educational Needs  
RE and multicultural education  
Geography  
History  
PSHE  
Information Technology  
Mathematics

#### Areas of departmental responsibility

Infant co-ordination  
Junior co-ordination  
Departmental meetings  
Departmental working parties  
Pastoral care  
Liaison with administrative staff  
Liaison with lunch time staff

Assemblies

Areas of representative responsibility

Management Team

Working parties

Courses

Governors meetings

Governors sub-committee meetings

Professional Development Centre (Teachers Centre)

Parents Association liaison

Partnership schools meetings

Community and industry links

Cross phase liaison

Committees and Forums

Areas of extra-curricular responsibility

Competitive sports arrangements

Visits, outings, shows

School journeys

After school clubs

Fund Raising

Areas of pastoral responsibility

Child protection

Home-school liaison

Parental interviews

Counselling

Behaviour policies and guidelines

Reward systems

Teacher tutor for NQTs

Student liaison

Staff induction



### Areas of statutory responsibility

Sex education  
Equal opportunities  
Child protection  
Health and Safety  
National Curriculum  
Assessment and Testing  
SEN Code of Practice  
Appraisal  
Reporting to Parents  
School Prospectus  
Registration of pupils

### Areas of administrative responsibility

Organisation of duties and rotas  
Arrangements for parental consultation  
Arrangements for students  
Curriculum area budgets  
School Development Plan  
T.V. and Radio broadcasts

## Appendix 2

### Teacher Responsibilities - 2 scale points

Below is an example of the responsibilities of a teacher in a small school (defined as 10 teachers or less under the LMS formula) with two responsibility points. This is from a survey of 5 small schools in the Authority. Overall lists of teacher responsibilities in schools are to be found in Appendix 1.

#### Curriculum

Between 2 and 4 curriculum areas are allocated to these teachers. One is most likely to be a core curriculum area and the others foundation subjects and/or other areas.

#### Departmental

Responsibility for a department is probable with arrangements for departmental meetings and working parties being likely. There would also be responsibility for some pastoral care within the school and liaison with other staff.

#### Representative

All would be members of the school management team and therefore have to represent staff on working parties and at other meetings which could include; Governors meetings, Partnership schools meetings, Parents Association meetings and general liaison duties. Also, these staff would have to take on many courses to keep abreast of curriculum and management developments.

#### Extra-curricular

These responsibilities varied from sports arrangements to journeys, visits, after school clubs and fund raising.

#### Pastoral

All staff were responsible for parental interviews and counselling. Some were also responsible for staff and student induction and home/school liaison.

#### Statutory

All were automatically responsible for teaching the National Curriculum, having regard to the SEN Code of Practice, reporting to parents, registering pupils and taking part in appraisal. Some were also responsible for Assessment and Testing.

### Administrative

Curriculum area budgets were a major responsibility as was heavy involvement in the production of the school plan. They also had to make arrangements for parent consultation meetings.

These are purely the duties undertaken by the above teachers from the lists of overall responsibilities provided (see Appendix 1). It can be seen that the workload is a heavy one and it must be remembered that it is in addition to teaching a class of children each day with the added responsibility of modelling good practice in their curriculum areas.

Worksheet showing information taken from  
the staffing structures of 50 primary schools.

Appendix 3

School	Total Staff inc.HT/DHT	HT	DHT	3pts	2pts	1pt	CPS	Total posts 1 to 3 pts.	% of staff with posts 1to3pts
1	4	1	1	0	1	0	1	1	25
2	8	1	1	0	5	0	1	5	63
3	9	1	1	0	3	2	2	5	56
4	9	1	1	0	3	2	2	5	56
5	9	1	1	0	2	1	4	3	33
6	9	1	1	0	2	1	4	3	33
7	9	1	1	0	3	2	2	5	56
8	9	1	1	0	1	2	4	3	33
9	9	1	1	0	3	2	2	5	56
10	10	1	1	0	2	1	5	3	30
11	10	1	1	0	2	2	4	4	40
12	10	1	1	0	2	4	2	6	60
13	10	1	1	0	2	3	3	5	50
14	11	1	1	2	2	5	0	9	82
15	11	1	1	0	2	2	5	4	36
16	12	1	1	1	2	5	2	8	67
17	12	1	1	4	0	4	2	8	67
18	12	1	1	0	2	2	5	4	33
19	12	1	1	0	0	5	5	5	42
20	12	1	1	0	0	0	10	0	0
21	13	1	1	0	3	7	1	10	77
22	13	1	1	0	2	2	7	4	31
23	15	1	1	1	3	2	7	6	40
24	15	1	1	0	5	2	6	7	47
25	16	1	1	1	4	5	4	10	63
26	16	1	1	1	5	8	0	14	88
27	16	1	1	1	3	3	7	7	44
28	17	1	1	0	3	3	9	6	35
29	17	1	1	2	3	1	9	6	35
30	17	1	1	2	3	4	6	9	53
31	18	1	1	1	4	3	8	8	44
32	18	1	1	1	5	4	6	10	56
33	18	1	1	1	3	5	7	9	50
34	18	1	1	2	5	4	7	10	56
35	18	1	1	2	3	4	7	9	50
36	19	1	1	2	3	7	5	12	63
37	20	1	1	2	5	2	9	9	45
38	20	1	1	2	3	4	9	9	45
39	20	1	1	4	2	5	7	11	55
40	20	1	1	3	2	4	9	9	45
41	20	1	1	4	2	3	9	9	45
42	20	1	1	1	4	3	10	8	40
43	21	1	1	1	6	4	8	11	52
44	21	1	1	2	6	1	10	9	43
45	22	1	1	2	5	1	12	8	36
46	22	1	2	3	4	5	7	10	45
47	23	1	1	3	4	3	11	10	43
48	24	1	1	2	5	6	9	13	54
49	26	1	1	2	6	6	10	14	54
50	38	1	2	4	7	11	13	22	58

Questionnaire and interview details for research into curriculum co-ordination in small and large primary schools. Participants are teaching staff who have moved between small and large schools.

Previous School    Present School

1. Forms of entry
2. Number of pupils (approx)
3. Number of teaching staff including head
4. Your curriculum responsibilities
5. Any other responsibilities
6. Your point on Salary Scale
7. What was any extra point on the scale for?
8. Within your curriculum responsibility have you:-
  - \*detailed schemes of work
  - \*worked alongside colleagues
  - \*arranged school based INSET
  - \*evaluated curriculum development
  - \*liaised with other schools
  - \*undertaken your own INSET
  - \*managed resources

Questions I would like to ask you will be about your time commitments, workload comparisons and your influence and effectiveness. I hasten to add that everything you tell me will be kept in the strictest confidence and your name will not be included in the text. I would also be very grateful if you would permit me to record our conversation as this saves me trying to take notes while we talk!

Dear

Please find attached a short questionnaire and some details of the questions I would like to ask you when we meet on . For your information my research defines curriculum responsibilities as the following:-

English  
Mathematics  
Science  
Technology  
Information Technology  
History  
Geography  
Art  
Music  
Physical Education  
Religious Education  
INSET  
SEN  
Assessment and Record Keeping

You may find this list useful when answering the questionnaire.

With many thanks for your help.

Regards,

Jack Bacon